



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

February 10, 2016

The Honorable Gary Daniels, Chair
Senate Capital Budget Committee
State House, Room 103
Concord, NH 03301

RE: SB 368, an act making an appropriation for department of environmental services monitoring equipment.

Dear Chairman Daniels and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 368. This bill makes a \$260,000 capital appropriation to support the purchase of monitoring equipment. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) supports this bill as it addresses a critical monitoring need for the state's coastal areas.

Understanding the condition of the Great Bay and Hampton-Seabrook estuaries is critical to maintaining these valuable resources that enhance our economy and our way of life. Through the contributions of federal, state and municipal governments as well as non-governmental organizations, many of our monitoring needs are being met -- but not all of them. Critical gaps exist in our ability to generate, analyze, translate, and share scientific data so it can be used to understand water quality trends, support local and state decisions, anticipate emerging problems, and to measure the success of upgraded water quality infrastructure and technology.

The requested appropriation would enable essential investments that should be made so that coastal communities can answer specific questions related to the benefit of their actions on water quality. For example, research suggests that by enhancing "green" infrastructure, decreasing pollution from septic systems, and protecting critical habitat, water quality can be improved in a cost-effective manner. Given the limited resources available for this type of work, however, one action may have to be prioritized over another. Unfortunately, science and monitoring organizations currently lack adequate resources to conduct new research, or maintain consistent monitoring, to help decision-makers prioritize their actions and evaluate the impact of their work. In addition, new threats to our coastal resources, such as coastal acidification, cannot be properly assessed as we currently do not have the equipment to monitor acidity (pH) in Great Bay. For this reason the appropriation would be used, among other things, to add a pH probe to the existing Great Bay monitoring buoy. The simple reality is that the rising costs of technology and human resources leaves the current pace of data collection, analysis and communication in jeopardy.

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Accordingly, the funds that would be appropriated under this request will enable NHDES to service and replace existing equipment, and to acquire new equipment to put in parts of the estuary where data are not currently being collected.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment in support of this bill. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Watershed Management Bureau Administrator Ted Diers (ted.diers@des.nh.gov or 603-271-8801) or me (Thomas.burack@des.nh.gov or 603-271-3449).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas S. Burack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Sponsors of SB368: Sens. Watters, Stiles, Boutin, Fuller Clark; Rep. Schroadter

